



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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FEDERAL FISH HATCHERIES FILL THE FISHERMAN'S CREEL

To provide "more and better fish for the fisherman's creel" is one of the major aims of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

Fish cultural stations maintained and operated by the Service's Division of Fish Culture in 45 States produce annually more than 8 billion fish and eggs, of approximately 46 species, to stock public and private waters. Of this total, about 120 million game species are distributed to suitable inland waters and streams.

Since 1932 this Division has undertaken the operation of 49 new fish cultural units, now bringing the total to 120. These new units include hatcheries, nurseries, and rearing units which were constructed by the former Bureau of Fisheries, or which were constructed by other governmental agencies and turned over to the Bureau for operation.

Only one of these new units has been designed exclusively for the propagation of a commercial species--the Pacific salmon. This development was provided in connection with the Grand Coulee Dam on the Columbia River.

Commercial species (salmon) are also propagated at two other establishments, but these units distribute large numbers of game varieties in addition. Since the remaining 46 new units are operated for the sole and exclusive benefit of the rod and reel angler, it readily can be concluded that practically all of the recent expansion in the Division of Fish Culture has been in the interests of the sportsmen.

Experimental hatcheries which have been initiated during this period, particularly those located at Leetown, West Virginia, and Welaka, Florida, have concentrated their studies upon improvements in methods used to propagate game species of fish. Brook, Loch Leven, rainbow and black-spotted trouts, largemouth and smallmouth black bass, rock bass, sunfish, crappie, and catfish are the species most extensively propagated for the stocking of game-fish waters.

Since practically every variety of fish found in the coastal and inland waters is sought at some time or place by the hook-and-line fishermen for recreation, the Federal hatchery contribution to recreation, therefore, would consist of billions of semi-game as well as strictly game fish.

Federal fish culturists estimate that the cost of producing commercial fishes averages \$21 per million, whereas the figure for game species is set at \$6,146 per million! This wide swing of the cost pendulum, however, can be accounted for easily. Commercial species, with the exception of lobsters, are all planted in the fry stages. In most cases they are planted when only a few days old; therefore, there is no cost chalked up for their feeding in the hatcheries.

Game fish, on the other hand, are not distributed until they reach the fingerling stage, of 3 to 8 inches. This factor necessitates more expensive feeding, larger water areas, a longer period of retention in the rearing units, plus continual supervision by the fish culturists to guard against disease. All of these

items add up to about 70 percent of the Division's appropriation, which must be expended for the production of game species.

With the output from these Federal hatcheries being planted in four out of five streams in every State in the Union, they undoubtedly constitute the answer to many a fisherman's prayer from Maine to California, and from Washington to Florida--wherever the "twine" doth meet.

The number of anglers in the United States has been placed at fifteen million, as a conservative estimate, and each and every one of these has his own particular favorite fishing spot where he believes his luck is best. To some this may mean Wisconsin's Brule with its speckled beauties, or Florida's Okeechobee and its bass, while to other ardent anglers their supreme choice may be New York's Cranberry Lake, Tennessee's Reelfoot, New Hampshire's Lake Sunapee, Maine's Rangeley Lakes for salmon and trout, or the mountain streams of Montana where rare and elusive grayling is slowly returning to its native haunts.

In a quick review of fertile fishing places, Florida crowds to the top of the list. Three things are synonymous with Florida--citrus fruit production, horse races, and fishing. Of these three, fishing, in capital letters, is far out in front, with more than 600 species to be found, and fought for, within its boundaries. Roaming the "ten-mile limit" are to be found the "emperors of the sea," such as sailfish, marlin, tarpon, bonefish, dolphin, wahoo, kingfish, Spanish mackerel, tuna, bonito, amberjack, bluefish, pompano, channel bass, sea trout, and ladyfish.

Crappie, bream, strawberry bass, bluegills and redbreasts frequent many waters of the State.

In addition, Florida provides one of the country's greatest black bass fishing grounds, with 30,000 lakes and an overlaping network of clear streams in

which these gamey fish lurk. The gamest, however, are to be taken from deep streams and lakes, or from holes in shallow lakes and streams.

In contrast, California--another sportsmen's paradise--produces rock bass, halibut, barracuda, and bonito off Catalina, San Clemente and Coronado Islands. Trout reigns supreme in Lundy and Oneida Lakes in the High Sierra region, while steelheads give the angler a run for his money in the Klamath and Eel Rivers.

California and New Hampshire tip their hats to one another because they both possess the beautiful and rare golden trout--a golden asset in particular to New Hampshire where they are to be found in Lake Sunapee.

Mention of trout always brings Colorado immediately to mind, for the fame of its wellknown trout streams--the Platte, the Gunnison, the Colorado, and the Fraser--has spread far and wide.

Fishing in Yellowstone National Park annually attracts thousands of tourists who seek the black-spotted trout.

Still rated today among the best trout streams in the East are the Beaverkill and the Neversink of New York State. Fifty years ago, so say the old records, it was possible to catch enough trout before breakfast, in one of these streams, to feed a good-sized family (say 10, or more) all day long.

For trout fishing in Pennsylvania, the angler naturally gravitates to such fine streams as Young Woman's Creek, Kettle Creek, Elk Creek, Pine Creek, and Penn's Creek. Potter County, in particular, is famed as trout country.

But Pennsylvania is not limited to trout; good bass lakes to be tried are Lake Gordon, near Cumberland (Md.); Lake Wallenpaupak in the northeastern part of the State, and the justly famous Lake Pymatuning in northwestern Pennsylvania. Bass, wall-eyes, and the smaller panfish are found in abundance in the Raystown branch of the Juniata.

Connecticut, too, has trout streams in the northwestern part of the State. Undoubtedly, its best are those situated in the foothills of the Berkshires. Smallmouth bass waters in the State include Groton and Long Ponds.

Connecticut, as well as New York and New Jersey, offers a variety of interesting species for the surf fishermen and the deep sea angler--striped bass, swordfish, flounders, tuna, and bluefish--all ready for the battle royal.

A sportsman's paradise for channel bass, drum, and blues is located down in North Carolina, at Oregon Inlet, which draws devotees from the entire eastern seaboard.

The quest of the mighty white marlin, in the vicinity of Ocean City, Maryland, brings sport fishing craft all the way from Florida to Maine.

Hundreds of boats put out daily along the lengthy coastline of Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia, seeking hardhead, porgy, kingfish, trout, channel bass, striped bass, and bluefish, in their seasons.

Maryland and Virginia are also famous for their mountain streams and lakes, so heavily stocked with trout. The title of "Fishing Rendezvous of Presidents" goes to Hunting Creek and the Catoctin area of Maryland, because of the fine fishing afforded so close to the Nation's Capital. Equally well known are the pools and falls of the Rapidan in the Front Royal section of Virginia.

Any discussion of East Coast fishing should not be concluded without a reference to the Chesapeake Bay region--a mecca for anglers from all parts of the East as well as the South--where hardhead and blues, sea trout and rock are found without disappointment. Quite frequently, too, the black bass of the brackish waters will be found within a stone's throw of Maryland's hardhead fishing spots.

To go West again, Idaho must not be neglected when listing "heavens" for anglers. This State, dotted with hundreds of lakes ranging in size from Pend

O'Reille--said to be the largest fresh-water lake entirely within United States boundary lines--to dozens of little lakes covering but a few acres, is also a noted trout paradise, featuring rainbows, eastern brook, and cutthroats. A fisherman's delight is the famed Priest River, which abounds with rapids, rocks, and swift waters. Other well known rivers in the heart of this great trout country are the Spokane, St. Joe, St. Maries, Elk, and Snake.

No review of favorite fishing spots is complete without mention of those in Michigan and Minnesota. With myriads of lakes, these two States offer everything that is fine and sporting in a variety of species such as brook or speckled trout, bass, pike-perch, wall-eyed pike, rainbow or steelhead trout, Great Northern pike, and a host of others.

But a few of the excellent fishing waters of Minnesota include Big-Too-Much and Doris Lakes for wall-eyes; Deer Lake and the Big Fork River for muskie; Sand, Fox, Crane, Hatch, and Turtles Lakes for Great Northern pike; Johnson Lake for largemouth bass, and Long Lake for Oswego bass.

The Au-Sable of Michigan--famous stream of the lumber days--provides excellent fishing for trout, with its 250 miles of alluring holes. There are trout and bass in the Presque Isle and Alpena district, as well as in the hundreds of creeks through the State.

But, wherever each angler's favorite fishing spot is to be found, whether in Idaho or Florida, Maine or California, it is not too far fetched to assume that many of the fish which will find their way into these fishermen's creels began their existence in one of the 120 Federal fish cultural units spread across the country.

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